



DATE: Wednesday, February 22, 2017

TO: Good afternoon Senator Osten, Senator Formica, Representative Walker, Representative Ziobron and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee

FROM: Justine Couvares Chief Program Officer Chrysalis Center Inc

I am here to comment on H.B. No. 7027 AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE THIRTIETH 2019, AND MAKING APPROPRIATIONS THEREFOR.

Good Afternoon Members of the Appropriation Committee

My name is Justine Couvares, Chief Program Officer at Chrysalis Center Inc, Chrysalis Center is a private, non-profit, socially innovative multiservice organization that serves individuals and families living in the State of Connecticut.

Chrysalis helps those living in poverty, Veterans, woman and children, young adults and individuals who are struggling with mental health, addiction, HIV/AIDS, those returning from incarceration and homelessness. Through job training, employment services, housing and other community healthcare services, Chrysalis Center helps individuals transform their lives.

I appreciate the opportunity to submit testimony in support of H.B. No. 7027 AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE THIRTIETH 2019

We are concerned with the reduction in funding of certain services in the DOC budget and respectfully ask the Committee to restore this funding.

The impact of the reduction in funding for Community Support Services within the DOC budget is amplified by reductions to reentry services in other areas of the Governor's Budget, including employment programs funded by the Department of Labor, which negatively affect the ability of formerly incarcerated individuals to gain meaningful employment, affordable housing, and other wrap-around services.

The employment services we provide to persons formally incarcerated are focused on a strong career track, mid-skill, stackable credentials in various industries and specifically in the trades industry. Trainings such as OSHA 10-30, welding, masonry, carpentry, fork lift, scaffolding, customer service and culinary trainings are provided among others. Job Developer staff works in the community with employers who would hire our clients, despite their felony record, with the knowledge that Chrysalis Center would support the client as they transitioned to fulltime employment.

Clients in this program gain a career skill set with above minimum wage earnings, thus reducing the likelihood of them returning to incarceration resulting in stronger families and stronger neighborhoods.

Without this type of employer focused community support, formally incarcerated individuals are more likely to return to incarceration.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions you may have.

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